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Transmission

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Transmission

Description

Review of *Transmission* / Kunzru, Hari. Transmission. New York: Dutton, 2004.

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Transmission

Posted on **September 1, 2004** by **Editor**



By **Jeffrey Barlow** <barlowj@pacificu.edu>

Editor, *Interface*

Kunzru, Hari. *Transmission*.

New York: Dutton, 2004.

Writers of book reviews much prefer to be able to recommend books, rather than to warn their readers against them. In reviewing fiction works that show some element of the impact of the Internet, we most often find ourselves in this latter, warning, mode. It is therefore a great pleasure to encounter a book that we can enthusiastically embrace. Hari Kunzru's *Transmission, A Novel*, is easily the most interesting and rewarding work we have encountered in this calendar year.

Mr. Kunzru previously wrote *The Impressionist*, which was generally well received, but thought by several reviewers to be uneven. [1] With *Transmission*, Mr. Kunzru has found both a wider audience and a more positive critical reception. [2] This is in part because *Transmission*, while giving wonderful and usually comedic insights into the cultural confusion created by the processes of globalization, also speaks to an increasingly universal concern for the impact of computers and the Internet.

Mr. Kunzru is extremely interested in computers and computing. His very creative personal web site [3] makes excellent and imaginative use of electronic materials. The protagonist of *Transmission*, Arjun Mehta, is, like many of us, also fascinated with computers:

Arjun glimpsed a secret in this yes-no logic... At last laying his hands on his own machine he became a computing hermit, fleeing into a place where communication was governed by clearly laid-out rules. Logic gates. Truth Tables. The world of people could go and rot. He closed his bedroom door on it. (100-101)

This love for computers eventually brings Arjun to a programming job in Redmond, Washington. Although he has come from quite a different environment in India, the worlds he had opened in

his computer prepared Arjun for this experience: “Redmond was a town with nice graphics and an intuitive user interface. His kind of town.” (50)

Unfortunately for him, and fortunately for Mr. Kunzru’s readers, Arjun is also fascinated with viruses. Soon he has produced a virus, in an effort to avoid being laid off, that threatens every machine in the world: “Across American citizens started to look with suspicion at the machines on their desks... By the time talk radio talk radio got hold of it, a consensus had emerged that the attack should be avenged in blood.” (145)

While the plot is somewhat manic and involves the improbable meeting of computers, love, Indian movie-making, and poor puzzled Arjun, the whole serves as a pastiche for provocative insights into globalization and the cultural stew that is resulting from the impact of the Internet.

Anybody who appreciates imaginative fiction and the insights of outsiders into contemporary American culture would enjoy this book. But for those of us interested in the impact of the Internet it should be considered required reading. The next time you hear an Indian accent in the telephone responding to your plea for technical assistance with the problems of your new software, you will find it impossible not to imagine Arjun on the other end.

Footnotes:

[1] For a very positive review by Daniel Mendelsohn writing in *The New York Magazine*, see: <http://www.newyorkmetro.com/nymetro/arts/books/reviews/5843/>;
for a much more negative one, Susannah Meadows writing in *The New York Times*, see: <http://query.nytimes.com/search/full-page?res=9A06E6DF1331F931A25756C0A9649C8B63>

[2] See Janet Maslin’s review in *The New York Times* at: <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=980CE4DF143FF934A25756C0A9629C8B63>

[3] Found at: <http://www.harikunzru.com/index2.html> Because his site, like his writings, is produced with as much intent to entertain and puzzle as to enlighten, a more straightforward summary such as that found at: <http://www.contemporarywriters.com/authors/?p=auth03B50073112634971> might also prove helpful in understanding Mr. Kunzru and his work.

This entry was posted in Uncategorized by **Editor**. Bookmark the **permalink** [<http://bcis.pacificu.edu/interface/?p=2962>] .

Mellissa Delvin

on **January 30, 2014 at 6:17 PM** said:

Hey There. I found your blog the use of msn. This is a very neatly written article. I will make sure to bookmark it and come back to learn extra of your useful information. Thanks for the post. I will certainly comeback.

dating

on **February 4, 2014 at 10:20 AM** said:

it is always very good to see these details inside your post, i was searching precisely the exact same but clearly there was hardly any appropriate resource, thanx now i've the connection that we wanted my research.

nigeria entertainment news

on **February 4, 2014 at 10:31 AM** said:

Hmm it seems like your web site ate my very first comment (it was quite long) so I guess I will just sum it up what I had written and say, I'm thoroughly enjoying your blog. I as well am an aspiring blog writer but I'm nonetheless new to everything. Do you have any recommendations for novice blog writers? I'd surely appreciate it. |Woah! I'm very loving the template/theme of this blog. It is simple, yet effective. Plenty of times it is tough to obtain that "perfect balance" among user friendliness and visual appearance. I have to say you have done a superb work with this. Also, the blog loads extremely fast for me on Safari. Outstanding Blog! |Do you mind if I quote 2 your articles as extended as I provide credit rating and sources back for ones site? My blog site is during the exact same area of interest as yours and my targeted traffic would truly benefit from plenty of the details you supply here. Please enable me know if this alright with you. Thank you! |Hi would you mind letting me know which webhost you happen to be using? I've loaded your blog in 3 different web browsers and I need to say this blog loads significantly faster than most. Can you recommend a great world-wide-web hosting provider at a sincere price? Thanks, I appreciate it! |Fantastic internet site you have right here but I was wanting to know should you knew of any discussion boards that cover the same topics talked about here? I'd very adore being a component of community in which I can get suggestions from other experienced persons that share the exact same interest. If you have any suggestions, please allow me know. Numerous thanks! |Hey! This really is my

first comment right here so I just wanted to give a quick shout out and say I truly appreciate reading your blog posts. Can you recommend any other blogs/websites/forums that go over the exact same topics? Enjoy it!|Do you've a spam difficulty on this website; I also am a blogger, and I was curious about your situation; we have produced some nice practices and we are searching to exchange approaches with other folks, please shoot me an email if interested.